



CSBG Success Story

Please submit success story to Jessica Simon at jessica.simon@commerce.wa.gov. If you have questions, contact Jessica at 360-725-2850. Due Date: The 10th of the month the story is due.

Date:	April 10, 2010
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Organization Name:	Opportunity Council (Island, San Juan, & Whatcom Counties)
Contact Person/Title:	Sheri Emerson
Contact E-mail:	sher_i_emerson@oppco.org
Contact Phone #:	360-734-5121 ext. 301

1. Success Story is for:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARRA <input type="checkbox"/> FFY 09 (skip to question 8) <input type="checkbox"/> FFY 10 (skip questions 6 & 7)
2. CSBG Project Name:	Community Energy Challenge
3. Total Project Budget:	\$3.31 million over two years, plus loan loss reserve funding (See attached funding chart)
4. Total CSBG Amount of Budget:	\$ 200,877
5. Number of total clients expected to serve, with all funds for the project:	1800 households, 150 businesses over two years.
6. Number of ARRA jobs expected to be created/retained as a result of this project:	35
7. Number of ARRA jobs actually created/retained as a result of this project to date:	5
8. Brief project/activity description:	A two-year pilot program designed to create jobs, increase energy efficiency, and reduce utility bills for homeowners and small business owners throughout Whatcom County.

9. How will this project help clients, build community, and form new partnerships? What aspects of the project would you like to share with the public:

Press release:

The Community Energy Challenge, a two-year pilot program launched in January 2010, is designed to create jobs, increase energy efficiency, and reduce utility bills for homeowners and small business owners throughout Whatcom County. The Opportunity Council is partnering with Sustainable Connections to deliver this new program that builds on the nationally recognized weatherization program.

Shawn Collins, Community Energy Challenge Manager, said the Opportunity Council is ideally situated to implement this new program that expects to serve 1,800 residences and 150 businesses in Whatcom County in the next two years.

"The Opportunity Council has been providing weatherization services in the community for more than 20 years and has a wealth of expertise in the field," Collins said.

Collins said the two-year pilot program will provide a comprehensive One Stop Shop to help customers with energy information, site energy audits, building and equipment retrofits, utility rebates and tax credits, financing through a revolving loan program, and contractor services. The project will generate approximately 35 local jobs and provide training to contractors interested in becoming certified in weatherization and energy efficiency retrofit work.

The multi-million dollar award is one of eight Community Energy Efficiency Pilot Program grants. The grant will build on additional support from the City of Bellingham, Whatcom County, Puget Sound Energy and Cascade Natural Gas.

The Community Energy Challenge will include a public outreach and education campaign with more information that will encourage local homeowners and small business owners to participate in the program.

Sustainable Connections is non-profit membership organization of 650+ northwest Washington business and community leaders working to transform and model an economy built on sustainable practices. Sustainable Connections was a lead partner in the 2006-2007 Green Power Community Challenge, which led to Bellingham's recognition as the number one EPA certified Green Power Community in the nation.

The Opportunity Council is a private, non-profit community action agency that acts as a catalyst for positive change, both in the community and in the lives of the people it serves. The organization offers a broad scope of services that range from addressing immediate and crisis-oriented needs to longer-term programs that promote self-sufficiency in our community.